4-H Leaders Training Series; online information @ your fingertips

The Situation
In 2002, in response to budget cuts, 4-H staffing models were restructured. University of Idaho (UI) Extension was committed to continue meeting the needs of Idaho’s citizens with fewer UI Extension faculty. This reorganization led to more responsibilities falling to County 4-H Program Coordinators and other staff. In addition, the only UI Extension 4-H Volunteer Specialist’s position was lost in 2009, adding to the critical need for a source of up-to-date 4-H leader training materials.

County 4-H Program Coordinators and faculty from the Southern District indicated that they needed ready-to-use presentations for a variety of training topics. These materials needed to be current, brief, engaging and preferably free. The training materials also needed to be designed so new staff, volunteers or teen leaders could use them to conduct trainings.

Our Response
In 2005, the 4-H Leaders Training Series (LTS) was developed. Thirteen short PowerPoint presentations were designed to be used for trainings in county leader meetings, club meetings, district activities or with other UI faculty and staff. Printed and electronic copies were distributed to county 4-H Program Coordinators in the Southern District and to others across Idaho who requested them. The training topics included: Involving Youth in Involvement Reports, Working with Parents, Partnerships with Club Officers, Teen Opportunities, 4-H Teen Ambassadors, Idaho 4-H Policies and Procedures, UI Civil Rights and Diversity Policies, Using the 4-H Name, Annual Summary Financial Report, Opportunities for Volunteers, Becoming a 4-H Volunteer, Cloverbuds in Idaho and Job Descriptions for 4-H Fair Superintendents.

In 2006, a 4-H LTS workshop was offered for staff and volunteers at the Idaho 4-H Leaders Forum. Comments from the Forum led to the creation of hands-on activities to be used with each training module. Support materials that could be used as handouts for several of the trainings were also developed.

Since 2007, these PowerPoint presentations and support materials have been posted on the UI 4-H website for easy access at: http://www.4h.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=103404. The 4-H LTS is reviewed yearly and updated as needed. In 2010, information was collected using Survey Monkey to help evaluate the usefulness of the 4-H LTS and determine if additional materials are needed. The survey was distributed to everyone on the Idaho 4-H list serve which includes, youth, adult volunteers, faculty and staff and other Idaho 4-H stakeholders.
4-H teens enjoy teaching and mentoring younger members. The 4-H LTS includes modules on Teen Opportunities, 4-H Ambassadors, Club Officers and working with Cloverbuds. Photo by Jeni Bywater.

**Program Outcomes**
The 4-H LTS is in no way meant to be a replacement for a Volunteer Specialist but a creative and inexpensive way to develop and distribute training materials for Idaho 4-H. Information collected using Survey Monkey is as follows:

Questions were asked to determine respondent’s demographics.

**Where do you work or volunteer?**
- 33% Southern District (Magic Valley/Wood River Valley)
- 30% Eastern District
- 14% Southern District (Boise/Treasure Valley)
- 12% Idaho 4-H YD Office (UI Campus)
- 11% Northern District

**How much 4-H experience do you have?**
- 46% Over 10 years
- 21% 7-10 years
- 18% 4-6 years
- 11% 1-3 years
- 4% Less than one year

Questions were asked to determine the effectiveness of the 4-H LTS. Multiple answers were allowed for these questions, respondents were asked to check those that applied.

**Where did you first hear about 4-H LTS?**
- 60% directly from Educator Gillespie
- 24% from the 2006 Idaho 4-H Leaders Forum
- 15% from the Idaho 4-H webpage

**At what kind of trainings have you used 4-H LTS?**
- 82% New Leader Training
- 77% Leader updates
- 35% 4-H Club meetings
- 30% Teen groups

**Rate your opinion of 4-H LTS.**
- 67% Materials were easy to use
- 59% Materials were presented professionally
- 52% Materials meet my needs
- 40% Materials are updated and timely

**Have you used the support materials with 4-H LTS?**
- 38% No
- 29% Yes
- 19% Didn’t know about them
- 14% Yes, with changes

**Recommended 4-H LTS to someone?**
- 59% To other UI 4-H Faculty/Staff
- 41% To 4-H Leaders
- 14% No
- 10% To 4-H teens
- 9% To other youth organizations

**Suggestions for additions to 4-H LTS?**
- Risk Management for Volunteers
- Livestock Topics
- Partnering with FFA
- Organizing Fairs

Information collected indicates that the 4-H LTS is being used across Idaho by both new and experienced 4-H professionals. They find the materials well done and usable in a variety of training opportunities.

Use of the 4-H LTS has led to an increase in knowledge of 4-H policies and youth development principles, better trained adult and youth volunteers and opportunities to explore and utilize online training. Plans are to continue to update and promote the 4-H LTS enabling its continued use.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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